

Lloyd House
Washington, Street
Alexandria, Virginia

HABS No. 58
HABS
VA.
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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Washington, D.C.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Delos H. Smith, District Officer
1702 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

The Lloyd House
220 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia

HABS No. VA-582

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The Lloyd House

Present Owner: Robert V. New
Wilmington, Delaware

Present Use: Unoccupied

Description: The Lloyd House, of late Georgian style and formal in composition is recognized as one of Alexandria's great mansions. This building is noteworthy as the full development of the town house with center hall and a pair of rooms on either side. Its doorway is considered one of the finest of the celebrated examples in town. The Lloyd House exhibits other refinements in its modillion and dentilled cornice, moulded sills, balusters in basement windows, arched dormers, and Aquia stone trim. The roof is gabled with tall paired inside end chimneys. There is a pent across the north end similar to that in the Edmund J. Lee House, City Tavern and other notable local buildings. A late nineteenth century map of Alexandria indicates there was an ell at one time along Queen Street.

Interior treatment does not approach promise of exterior. There is a good stairway and some original trim including the hall dado. Original mantels have disappeared. Combination of plaster and wood cornices calls for further study as does also the heterogeneous assortment of old hardware. The inside treatment of the arched doorway with its "Sheraton-type" reeding is indicative of the pivotal dating of the building (i.e. its proximity to 1800). Another clue is the absence of any watertable.

History: The Lloyd House was built between 1793 and 1796, more likely the latter date which appeared on the gutterhead detailed for HABS. This example (now in a ruinous state) is definitely an old one and seems to be of the period. It is handmade of tin with numerals fashioned of lead and soldered on.

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From all indications John Wise was the builder and he may have been the designer as well. The building occupies land sold in the late eighteenth century by Charles Alexander, of the family for which Alexandria was named. The chain of title shows that Alexander sold to Richard Ratclipp in 1785; from him it passed to Wise. City records reveal that before 1797 Wise had acquired three lots adjoining: one at the corner of Washington and Cameron Streets, one at Cameron and Columbus and another at Columbus and Queen. This embraces the Lloyd House property. Wise at the time was owner of the City Tavern, which he had let to John Gadsby. Wise advertised his home for rent in the Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette of 1798:

TO BE RENTED

The property I at present occupy, at the corner of Washington and Queen Streets.

The situation and convenience of this property are equal to any in town...

John Wise

(November 10)

Further Notes on Owners and Occupants:

1. John Wise was one of the most celebrated innkeepers of his day and a speculator in real estate. At the time he occupied the Lloyd House it was known as "John Wise's Mansion". Wise sold it to Jacob Hoffman in 1810 for \$5,000 plus ground rent.

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2. Jacob Hoffman was mayor of Alexandria from 1820 to 1822 and while he was living in the Lloyd House it became known as "Hoffman's Mansion House". It continued to be called this even after the Hooe family acquired it. Hoffman was one of Alexandria's most influential citizens, a flour and grain merchant.

3. James Hooe paid \$13,000 for this Mansion in 1824. His family had been prominent from the time of the founding of Alexandria. The Hooes later owned the Lyceum, now called the McGuire House. In 1826 the widow Hooe rented the Lloyd House to Benjamin Hallowell, and here he moved his school. Gay Montague Moore, in Seaport in Virginia, tells of his tenure here:

"....In 1826 Benjamin Hallowell rented it from the widow Hooe and in the spring vacation with his ill wife in his arms, moved into this building so admirably adapted to his purpose.

"'My school room', he tells us (in his Autobiography), was on the first floor, north end, all across the house. I having obtained permission of my Landlady in our arrangements, to remove the partition on condition of replacing it by one with folding doors, when I should leave the property, which was done. My lecture room was the back room over the school room....The very day the quarter's rent was due the widow Hooe's carriage was at the door, and this continued to be her custom as long as she lived. If I had not the money, which was usually the case, I would frankly tell her so, and add that the first money I could get, and could possibly spare, I would take to her, with which she was always satisfied. She never said a word like urging me, or being disappointed in not getting the rent due, and I did take her the very first I received, never permitting it to be in my possession overnight'."

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"The frail Mrs. Hallowell opened a school for girls in the front room over the schoolroom, and Hallowell lectured to her scholars. Money being very scarce at the time, they could not afford two stoves, so Hallowell and the servant, Nancy, carried the stove from school room to lecture room as needed.

"'On the 17th of Ninth month, 1830', the Autobiography continues, 'commenced giving private lessons to Angela Lewis, daughter of Major Lawrence Lewis (who was a nephew of General Washington, and it was said a good deal resembled him in appearance). These lessons continued through the year, for which I charged fifty dollars, and the Major promptly sent me his check for the amount. Eleanor Lewis (Nelly Custis), Angela's mother, always attended at her daughter's recitations in English, Grammar, Parsing, Natural Philosophy, etc., so that her influence, which she afterward exerted in my favor, and her praise of my method of teaching, was of greater value to me than the amount I received in hand for teaching her daughter.'"

"In the meantime he struggled along with debt, with illness, with sorrow. Scarlet fever wiped out three of the four Hallowells in nearly the same number of weeks. He witnessed the cholera in Alexandria and had the unhappy experience of seeing a man drop dead of the plague before his eyes; he heard the market square echo to the feet of soldiers mustering and drilling in preparation for war in Mexico.

"This man had the most singular relationships in his business dealings....Everyone trusted him....

"Hallowell was city surveyor, but accepted no fee because it afforded a fine opportunity to instruct his pupils in 'Field Practice with Odolite and Level'. He was something of an architect, improving

every place he occupied and building two fine structures in town.

"In 1831 the widow Hooe died and in the Spring of 1832 the house which he had acquired for a school in 1826 was put up at auction".

Hallowell hoped to purchase the building, but the cash he could raise failed to match the bid of \$3,450 offered by John Lloyd.

4. John Lloyd was the man who gave the house its enduring name, for his descendants owned it for nearly a century. Lloyd was married to Ann Harriott Lee, daughter of Edmund Jennings Lee (mayor and leading citizen of Alexandria), uncle of Robert E. Lee. The catalogue of "Our Town" states, "In 1832 her husband (speaking of Ann Lee Lloyd) purchased the house at 220 North Washington Street, in which Benjamin Hallowell had maintained his school since 1826. On the Sunday following General Lee's resignation from the United States Army, he attended Christ Church in Alexandria, leaving his daughter and his carriage at Mrs. Lloyd's home. When he and Mrs. Lloyd's brother, Cassius Lee, Sr. (Lee's closest friend) left services, they found the commissioners sent by the Virginia convention waiting in the Church yard to offer Lee command of the Virginia forces". They walked together to the Lloyd House, ending their conference on the house steps. Thus, the Lloyd House became famous as a landmark of an important event in Lee's life and Virginia's history.

In Seaport in Virginia, Mrs. Moore writes of the Lloyd House during the century the family owned it. "Ancient mahogany filled the rooms, portraits of ancestors lined the walls. General Lee was a frequent visitor in this house. The Lloyds intermarried with the Lees, and Mrs. Lloyd was General Lee's first cousin. His daughter, Miss Mary Custis Lee, always stayed here when visiting in Alexandria. The last Lloyds to live in the house were two very old ladies.....

"A...peculiarity of this household was the fashion of being admitted to the mansion. After repeated ringing of the bell, a second story window would open--those not in the know often left--and in a leisurely fashion a grape basket was lowered by a long string. Inside the basket, those who were familiar with the proceeding, would find the front door key, a large, heavy iron affair, somewhat like that to the Bastille now on display at Mount Vernon, and with this they let themselves in."

References: Files of the Alexandria Association and Historic Alexandria Foundation.

Alexandria Association, Our Town 1749-1865, Alexandria, Virginia, 1956

Davis, Deering, Stephen P. Dorsey and Ralph Cole Hall, Alexandria Houses: 1750-1830, New York, 1946

Hallowell, Benjamin, Autobiography, Philadelphia, Pa., 1883.

Moore, Gay Montagne, Seaport in Virginia: George Washington's Alexandria, Richmond, 1949.

Prepared by: Russell Jones and Worth Bailey, HABS, National Park Service, September 19, 1959.

Approved: _____

Dick Sutton
Chief Architect

Date

11/25/59